

DNR can help landowners with storm-damaged woodlands

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Foresters from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are ready to assist Northwest Wisconsin landowners who experienced storm damage to their woodlands last week. On May 16, a severe storm started in Polk County, left a path of destruction in Barron and Rusk counties, and ended in Price County. Governor Scott Walker declared a State of Emergency for Barron, Jackson and Rusk counties following the tornadoes and damaging storms.

"While the [path of the storm was narrow](#), it caused substantial damage," said DNR Area Forestry Specialist Steve Runstrom. The DNR aeronautics program will be assessing the damage from the air this week so foresters can better map the impacted woodlands.

Landowners with woodlands damaged by the storm are encouraged to contact their local DNR forester. The name and contact information is available at dnr.wi.gov, and search by "forestry assistance locator."

Additionally, the Division of Forestry offers advice for dealing with the storm-damaged woodlands at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestlandowners/stormrecovery.html>.

DNR Forestry officials also said that the downed timber in the aftermath of the storm can create a wildfire hazard. Wildfires that start in blown-down timber typically burn hot and are difficult to control.

"Exercise extreme caution if you are disposing of debris by burning it or you could be putting your home and neighbors at risk. Never burn debris under overhanging tree limbs, power lines or close to homes or other structures," Runstrom said. "We encourage you to consider alternatives to burning, such as composting, chipping, or hauling debris to disposal sites."

Runstrom reminded homeowners and landowners to get a burning permit and check the daily conditions before burning any downed timber. Both can be done online at dnr.wi.gov with the keyword "fire danger" or by calling 1-888-WIS-BURN (947-2876).

DNR also encourages everyone to clear fallen debris that is within 100 feet of homes and cabins to greatly reduce the risk of fire damaging these valuable structures. For more information, visit dnr.wi.gov, keyword "fire" and click on the link titled "protecting property."

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